

Home Schooling Achievement

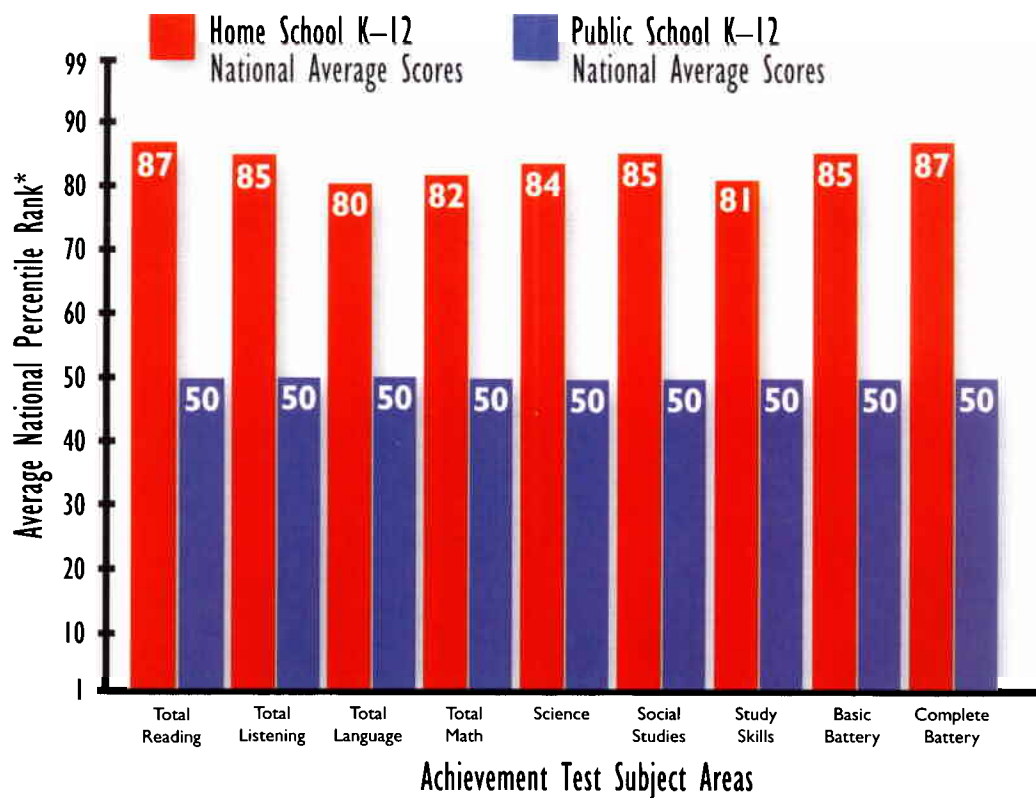


Why are so many parents choosing to home school? Because it works.

A 1997 study by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) found that home educated students excelled on nationally-normed standardized

achievement exams. On average, home schoolers outperformed their public school peers by 30 to 37 percentile points across all subjects (*Figure 1.0*).

Figure 1.0 — How Do Home School Students Score?



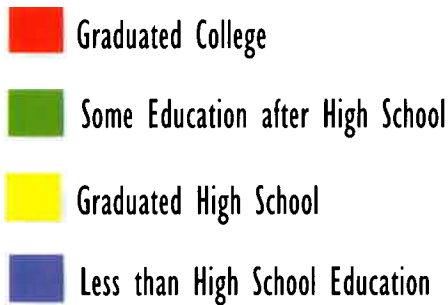
Footnote: (Ray, 1997) Data collected for standardized academic achievement tests for the 1994-95 academic year.

*For more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the

ends of the scale, see the complete study by Brian D. Ray, *Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits*, 1997, Salem, OR: National Home Education Research Institute.

Does Parent Education Level Predict Student Achievement?

Key for Figures 2.1–2.3: Parents' Highest Education Level Attained



Footnotes: (Ray, 1997) *For more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale, see Ray 1997.

**Basic battery achievement test scores not available for public school students.

***Public school data are for 8th grade writing scores and 13-year-olds' math scores based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trends in academic progress* [trends report and appendices]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Home school data are for grades K–12.

Figure 2.1 — Home School Achievement — Basic Battery Test

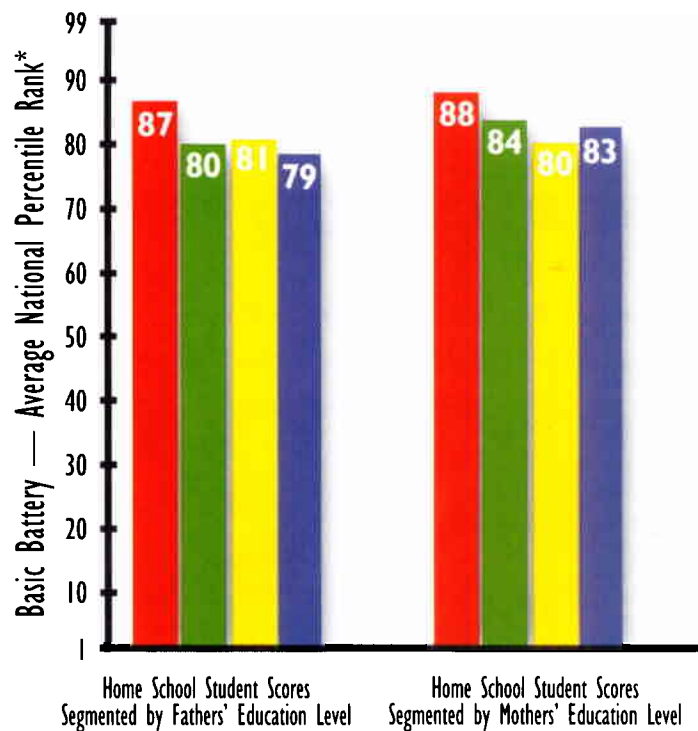


Figure 2.2 — Public School Achievement — Writing Test**

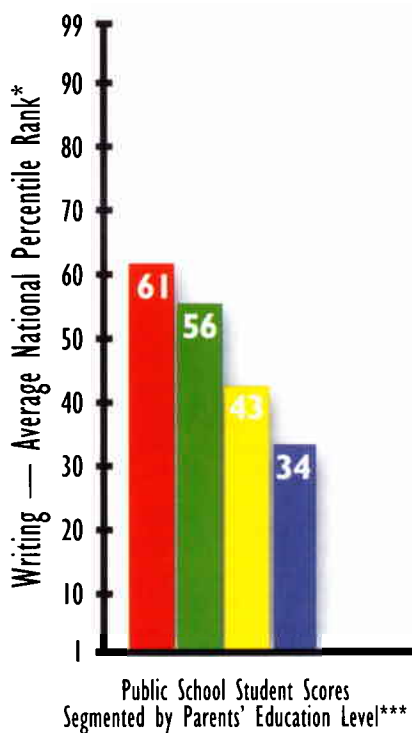


Figure 2.3 — Public School Achievement — Math Test**

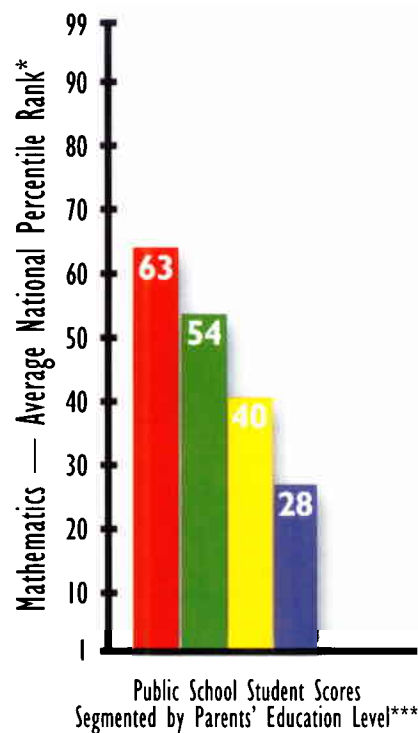
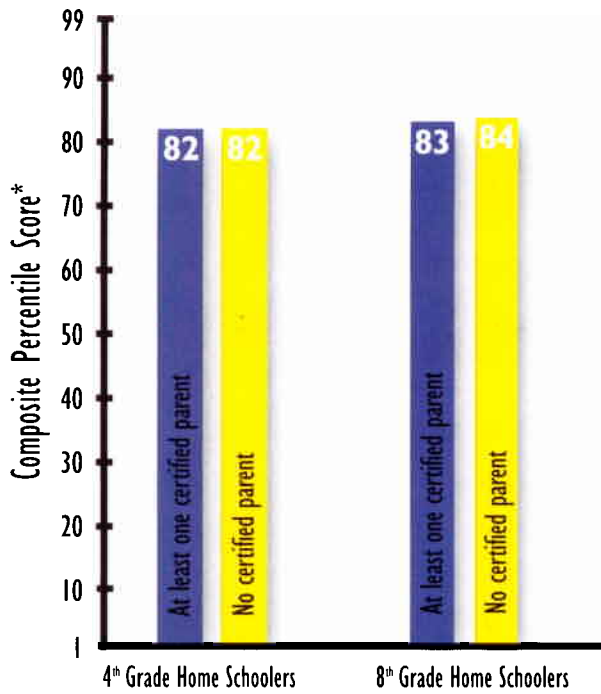
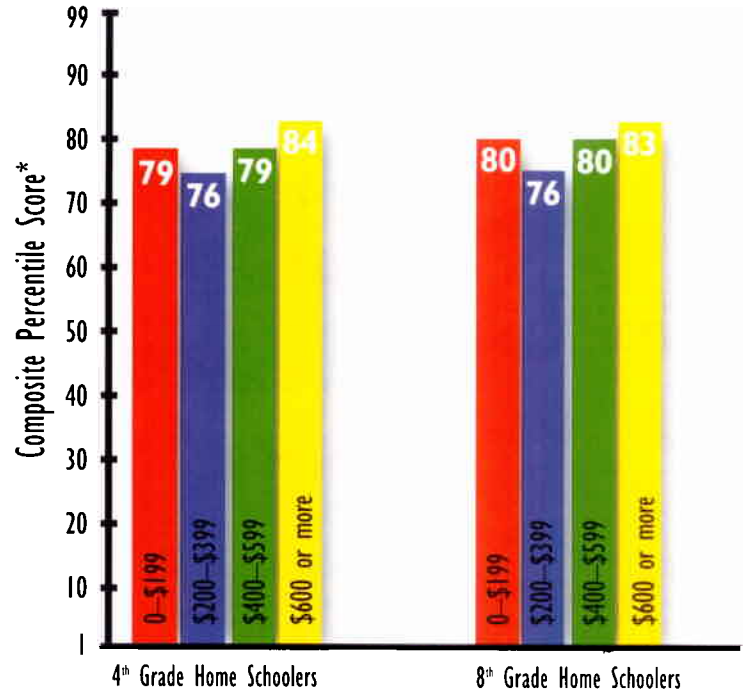


Figure 3.0 — Home School Percentile Rankings Based on Parent Certification



Footnote: (Rudner, 1999) *Composite Percentile Score refers to the percentile corresponding to the mean composite scaled score.

Figure 4.0 — Home School Percentile Scores Based on the Money Spent on Education per Child



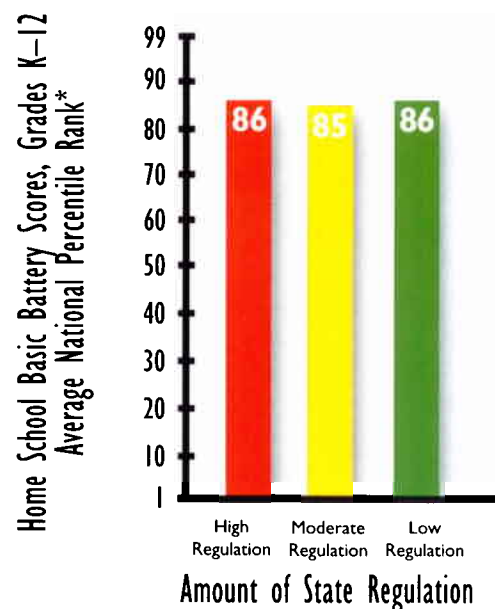
Footnote: (Rudner, 1999) *Composite Percentile Score refers to the percentile corresponding to the mean composite scaled score.

Is Government Regulation Necessary for High Achievement?

Key for Figures 5.1 & 5.2

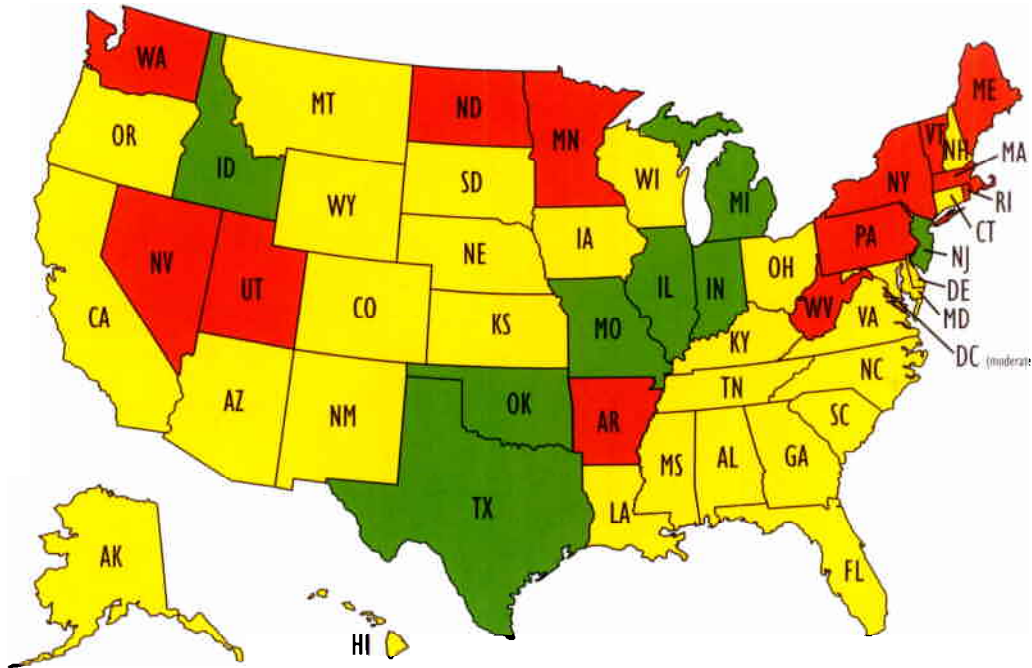
- Low Regulation**
No state requirement for parents to initiate any contact with the state.
- Moderate Regulation**
State requires parents to send notification, test scores, and/or professional evaluation of student progress.
- High Regulation**
State requires parents to send notification or achievement test scores and/or professional evaluation, plus other requirements (e.g., curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualifications of parents, or home visits by state officials).

Figure 5.1 — State Regulation: No Impact on Home School Achievement



Footnote: (Ray, 1997) *See study for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

(Ray, 1997)



Home schooling's one-on-one tutorial method seemed to equalize the influence of parents' educational background on their children's academic performance. Home educated students' test scores remained between the 80th and 90th percentiles, whether their mothers had a college degree or did not complete high school (*Figure 2.1*).

In contrast, a parent's education level did appear to affect the performance of children in traditional school settings (*Figures 2.2, 2.3*). Students taught at home by mothers who never finished high school scored a full 55 percentile points higher than public school students from families of comparable educational backgrounds. Similarly, in his 1999 study, Dr. Lawrence M. Rudner found no difference in achievement according to whether or not a parent was certified to teach (*Figure 3.0*). For those who would argue that only certified teachers should be allowed to instruct their children at home, these findings suggest that such a requirement would not meaningfully affect student achievement.

Rudner also found that the median amount of money spent in 1997 on educational materials for home school students was \$400. Considering this relatively small expenditure in light of the high scholastic achievement of most home school students, it is reasonable to conclude that it does not require a great deal of money to home school successfully (*Figure 4.0*).

According to Ray, the degree of governmental regulation had no significant effect on the academic performance of home schoolers

(Figure 5.1, 5.2). Whether a state imposed a high degree of regulation, low regulation, or no regulation, home school student test score averages were nearly identical. Such regulations may be legitimately questioned since there is no apparent benefit to student learning.

Traditionally, gender and race have been consistent predictors of student performance. But home schooling is breaking down those barriers. Math and reading scores for minority home school students show no significant difference when compared to white's. A similar comparison for public schools students, however, demonstrates a substantial disparity (*Figures 6.0*).

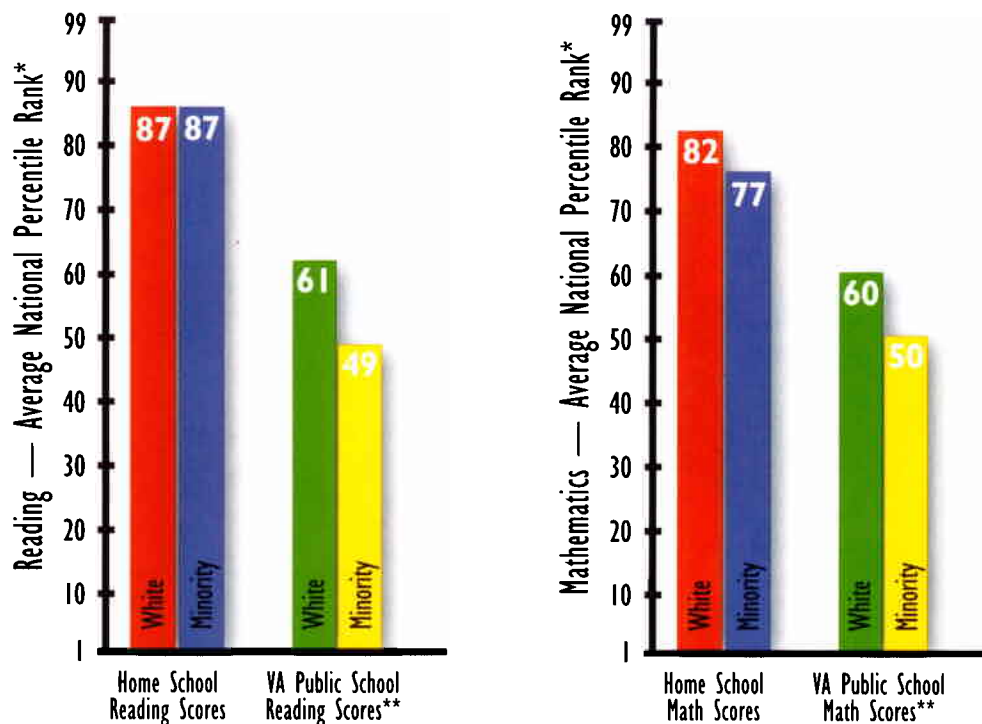
When segmented by gender, test scores for home schoolers reveal that boys are slightly better in math and girls are somewhat better in reading. Public school student performance in math follows a similar pattern, but public school boys' reading scores are markedly behind girls' (*Figure 7.0*).

The first question the general public asks whenever home schooling is mentioned is, “What about socialization?” Data on home school students’ activities and community involvement reveal that, on average, these children are engaged in 5.2 activities outside the home (*Figure 8.0*).

Home schooling is an effective educational alternative chosen by dedicated and loving parents for their children. Not only is it working, it is working very well!

How Do Minorities Fare in Home Education?

Figure 6.0 — Race Relationship to Reading and Math Test Scores



Footnotes: (Ray, 1997) *See study for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

**Public school achievement data are based on 8th grade scores from Table 4 of *The Virginia Assessment Program: Results for the 1995-1996 School Year* (1996, July). Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education.

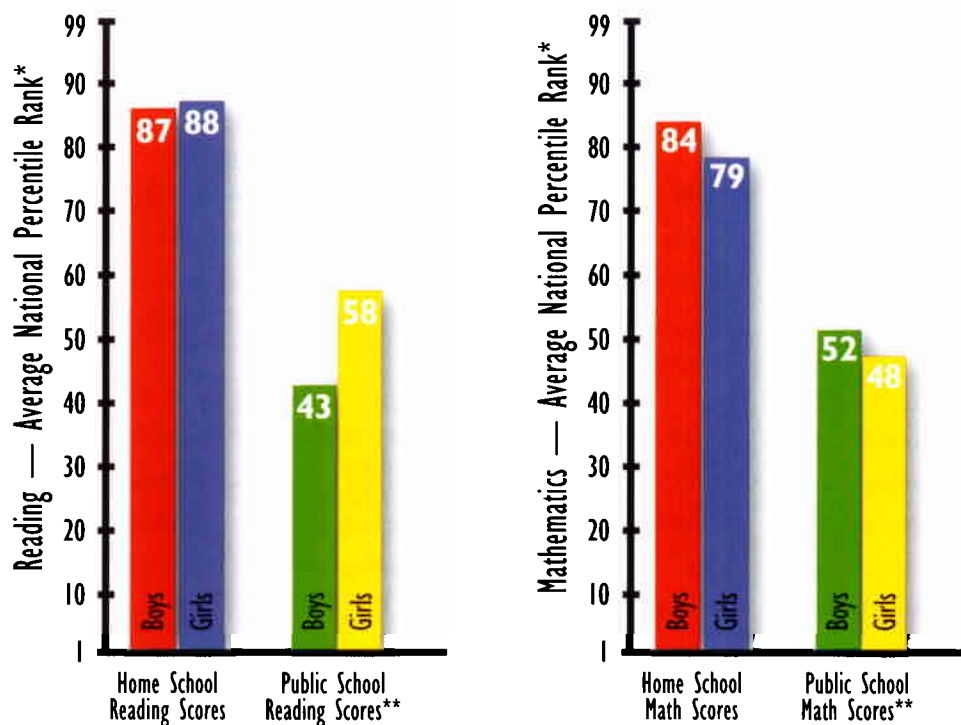
The Virginia minority scores were weighted according to the proportions of minorities in this study of home schoolers to arrive at the numbers in this figure. The minority groups were American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, black, and Hispanic. Of home school minority students tested in this study, about 63% were black or Hispanic.

Public school achievement data are similar for the U.S. in general but the same detail of data was not available for all public schools. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trends in academic progress* [trends report and appendices]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Home school data are for grades K-12.

What About the Gender Gap in Academics?

Figure 7.0 — Gender Relationship to Reading and Math Test Scores



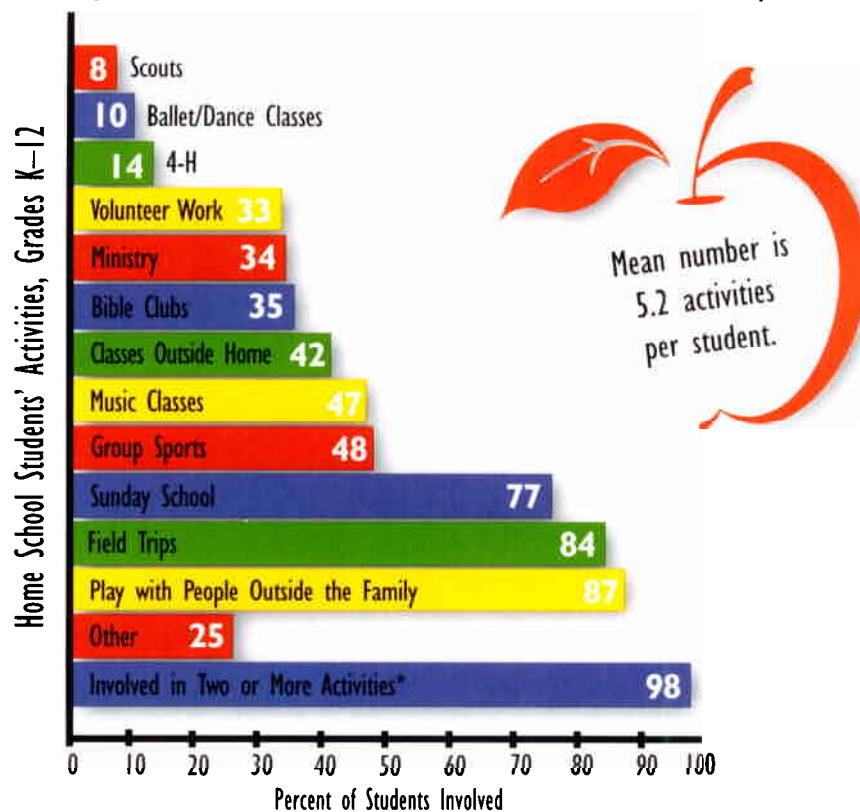
Footnotes: (Ray, 1997) *See study for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

**Public school achievement data are for 8th grade based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trends in academic progress* [trends report and appendices]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Home school data are for grades K-12.

What about Socialization?

Figure 8.0 — Home Schoolers' Activities and Community Involvement



Footnote: (Ray, 1997) *Participation in two or more of the 12 activities does not include "other activities." See Table 8 in study.

About the Research

Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits, Brian D. Ray, 1997 (book).

Dr. Brian D. Ray collected data on 5,402 home school students from 1,657 families for the 1994–95 and 1995–96 academic years. Nearly 6,000 surveys were sent to home school families. Some surveys were mailed directly to families (those randomly selected from numerous mailing lists and longitudinal participants from a 1990 study). Others were blindly forwarded to families through the leadership of independent home school support groups and networks in every state. This was the largest and most comprehensive study on home schooling to that point.

Brian D. Ray, Ph.D., is president of the National Home Education Research Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in science education from Oregon State University, has an M.S. in zoology (1979), and has been a professor and classroom teacher. NHERI conducts basic data gathering research; serves as a clearinghouse of information for researchers, home educators, attorneys, legislators, policy makers, and the public at large; and provides speaker services. NHERI also publishes research reports and the unique, academic, refereed journal *Home School Researcher*.

The full study is available from NHERI for \$8.95, plus \$2 shipping.

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The Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998, Lawrence M. Rudner, 1999.

Conducted by Dr. Lawrence M. Rudner and commissioned by HSLDA, this study involved seven times as many families as any previous study of its kind: 20,760 students in 11,930 U.S. families.

Unlike any previous study, families chose to participate before they knew their children's test scores, minimizing the possibility of selective reporting. All participants took the same tests: the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for grades K–8 and the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency for grades 9–12, both published by the Riverside Publishing Company.

Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D., is with the College of Library and Information Services, University of Maryland in College Park. He has been involved in quantitative analysis for over 30 years, having served as a university professor, a branch chief in the U.S. Department of Education, and a classroom teacher. For the past 14 years, he has been the director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation. Dr. Rudner holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology (1977), an MBA in Finance (1991), and lifetime teaching certificates from two states. His two children attend public school.

For a copy of the full report, see *Education Policy Analysis Archives* at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n8/>

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June 21, 2003

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Ms. Millie Flandro & Dr. Rich Hagood, Co-Chairs
Education Committee
Blue Ribbon Task Force
Office of the Governor
Boise, Idaho 83720

Re: Draft Recommendation, Home Education

Dear Ms. Flandro, Dr. Hagood, and Members of the Education Committee:

The Boards of Directors of both of the statewide Idaho home schooling organizations, the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators (ICHE) and Christian Homeschoolers of Idaho State (CHOIS), have met to review the draft Education Committee Recommendation regarding home education.

Please accept this letter as the boards' unequivocal statement of opposition to the draft recommendation. The boards encourage you to reject the proposed recommendation in its entirety due to the pervasive misunderstandings it embodies both concerning home education itself, the current state of the law, the educational process, and the fiscal impact that will result from the proposal.

Introduction:

The draft recommendation issues a call for the registration and testing of all home educated students in the state of Idaho. It places on local school districts (or other private organizations approved by the State Board of Education) the burden of administering the state assessment test and prosecuting students and the parents of those students who fail to achieve basic proficiency levels.

One may well wonder how this proposal falls within the purview of the task force's call to offer suggestions designed "*to produce a blueprint that will guide development of an efficient, effective system of government.*" Indeed, in light of the continuing academic struggles experienced by the public school system, it is startling to encounter a proposal that would burden with a massive bureaucracy the very system in Idaho that produces the highest academic achievement levels.

Regardless of how ill-advised the proposal is on a philosophical level, its inaccuracies in a number of other areas (incorrect factual assertions, the failure to recognize existing legal authorities, erroneous educational methodologies, and

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overlooked fiscal impacts) requires the immediate and unequivocal rejection of the recommendation.

Factual Errors:

For a number of years, the board of the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators has heard allegations from professional educators and various members of the state legislature that there were a significant number of children in the state whose parents claimed that they were teaching their children at home when they were, in fact, giving them no education at all. The Accreditation and Elementary Services Coordinator at the Idaho Department of Education claimed that he received an average of two such reports each week.

ICHE's extensive experience with the home education community had not encountered such situations. Because these reports were almost always third or fourth-hand anecdotal accounts, they were extremely difficult to verify or refute.

Nonetheless, ICHE wanted to know if those reports had merit, and to silence the critics of home education if they did not. As a result, ICHE agreed to set up an informal arrangement with the Idaho Department of Education. It was agreed that the Accreditation and Elementary Services Coordinator would serve as the conduit to pass all reports or complaints received by the department to ICHE. Those reports were then forwarded directly to former Rep. Robert Forrey, an advisor to our organization.

Mr. Forrey, a supporter of home education, agreed that he would personally investigate each situation brought to his attention to ascertain if the parents in question was having genuine difficulties in educating their children. If they were, it was agreed that ICHE would offer assistance to the family through the local ICHE regional coordinator. With the wide array of excellent diagnostic tools and curricula available to home educators, an effective educational program can be designed for the individual needs of each home situation. If the parents were truly incapable of providing competent instruction for their children, ICHE would encourage them to place the children into other private or public school settings.

That system was instigated over three years ago. At the end of one year we met with those who had requested that we set up the system to report on the first year's outcomes. The results: not a single complaint had even been passed on to us.

State agencies then put out the word to school districts across the state encouraging school district and law enforcement personnel to pass on all such complaints to the appropriate person at the Department of Education.

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Eventually, after another six months, a cluster of complaints were forwarded to ICHE. Each complaint was investigated. The results for the year 2002, each of which were reported back to the Department of Education as promised, were as follows:

<u>Outcome of Inquiry:</u>	<u>No. of Situations</u>
Complaining party failed to respond to letters and calls	6
Complaint did not involve home schooled child	4
Complaining party failed or refused to identify the family about whom the complaint was made	2
Student was not the proper age to be subject to compulsory school law	2
Complaining party or public official indicated the situation was resolved or under control	2
Family and curriculum assessed and found legally adequate	1

Family and curriculum assessed and found not legally adequate: 0

So far in 2003, ICHE has received a total of two "complaints." However, one of those was not a complaint about a home educated student. It was a complaint by a home educating family that their child was being hindered in his efforts to participate in his local public school on a dually-enrolled basis. The other contact was a philosophical complaint concerning the lack of forced testing for home educated students.

In short, the massive problems with home education perceived by the professional education community now appear not merely to have been overblown, but essentially nonexistent.

Another myth with which home educators have more recently dealt is that of the "home educated" juvenile delinquent. Accounts have circulated regarding home educated students running wild in the streets under the guise and protection of home education. However, when asked for specific instances of such claims, none have been produced. Indeed, when an Ada County District court judge was recently asked how many home educated persons had been brought before him on juvenile or criminal charges in his fourteen years on the bench, he reported that not a single criminal or juvenile defendant had been home educated.

Does this prove that home educated students have never been in legal trouble? Of course not. Yet quelling the myth remains difficult, if not impossible.

The Task Force Education Committee is now faced with a draft recommendation which seems to presuppose the existence and truth of these two myths. The recommendation claims that there are a significant number of families claiming to home educate who actually are simply keeping the children "out of school for other reasons,

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e.g. neglect, abuse, and home responsibilities.” The draft recommendation likewise includes numerous references to the “truancy” and “juvenile crimes” of home educated students.

Even if the remainder of the draft recommendation were not fatally flawed, this disturbing mischaracterization of home educated students by itself would render the recommendation unworthy of support. However, the other shortcomings of the recommendation are equally pervasive.

Legal Inaccuracies:

The draft recommendation also reveals a number of erroneous legal assertions.

First, it repeatedly refers to the federal “*No Child Left Behind Act*” as the rationale and standard that should be applied to home educated students. Yet Title 20, section 7886(b) of the Act states the following:

“Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect a home school, whether or not a home school is treated as a home school or a private school under State law, nor shall any student schooled at home be required to participate in any assessment referenced in this Act.” (emphasis added)

Indeed, any attempt to require home educated students to be tested by an assessment of the type referred to in the Act would violate federal law and might jeopardize the state’s federal funding for education.

Second, the draft recommendation incorrectly asserts that “*(t)here is no provision in the law for the truant officer or any other authority to pursue truancy for home schooled children . . .*” The fact is that, not only are home schooled students subject to all truancy laws, but their parents are also subject to criminal prosecution if they fail to adequately teach their children.

Section 33-206 of the *Idaho Code* states that, “*(a)n habitual truant is . . . any child whose parents or guardians, or any of them, have failed or refused to cause such child to be instructed as provided in section 33-202, Idaho Code, and the child shall come under the purview of the juvenile corrections act if he or she is within the age of compulsory attendance.*” Section 33-202 is the general statute that requires parents to make certain that their children are properly educated, whether within public, private, or parochial school, or by otherwise comparably instructing them at home.

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Within the *Juvenile Corrections Act*, section 20-526 provides that, "*(a)ny person who by any act or neglect encourages, aids, or causes a juvenile to come within the purview or jurisdiction of this chapter . . . shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.*" That, of course, includes the parent of any home schooled child who fails to adequately educate that child.

Consequently, the recommendation's premise that home educated students are not subject to the state's existing truancy laws is false. Not only the students, but the parents, as well, are subject to prosecution and possible detention or incarceration if the child is not being properly educated.

Third, the recommendation mistakenly asserts that the 1992 amendment to section 33-202 resulted in parents being given control of the educational decisions instead of the local school district. However, both before and after the amendment, that statute began with the unequivocal statement that, "*(t)he parent or guardian of any child . . . shall cause the child to be instructed in subjects commonly and usually taught in the public schools of the state of Idaho.*" The responsibility has never been the school district's. It has always been the parents'. The 1992 amendment had absolutely no impact on that fundamental responsibility of the parents.

It is also significant to note that the 1992 amendment was not only supported by home schooling parents, it was supported by various public school administrators, as well. The public school districts only have jurisdiction over the public schools. They have never had, and generally have no desire for, jurisdiction over private schools, parochial schools, or home schools.

Finally, it is worth observing that the draft recommendation, if implemented, would impose a significant bureaucracy on a community that has thus far thrived on precisely those freedoms that have produced the highest academic achievement in the state. Again, one must wonder at the wisdom of governmental intrusion into the very educational system in Idaho that costs the state nothing, and singularly appears not to be in need of fixing.

National studies of academic performance of home educated students have determined that registration and/or testing requirements for home educated students yield no measurable improvement in standardized test scores. On average, test scores are identical whether a state imposes a high degree of regulation, low levels of regulation, or no regulation at all.¹ Since such regulations yield no return on investment, there can be no reason for the state to make that "investment."

An "*effective and efficient*" form of government would reward those who are excelling with ever greater freedoms. Restricting home educators with the bureaucratic burdens called for by this recommendation would be counterproductive.

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The foregoing legal misunderstandings have resulted in a draft recommendation that is unsupportable. However, it also suffers from significant errors as to the presumptions it makes with regard to educational methodology.

Educational Fallacies:

The weight of data from several decades of research has established that public school students fail to perform as well academically as do home educated students.²

Based upon recent Iowa Tests of Basic Skills test scores, nationally, public school students score on the 50th percentile on average. Idaho's public school students perform slightly better, having scored on the 54th percentile in 2001, the latest available data. Idaho's own home educated students on average scored on the 84th percentile in 2003.

Public school students who are withdrawn to be taught at home will typically reach the 74th percentile within the first two years. *"On average home school students in grades 1-4 perform one grade level higher than their public and private school counterparts ... [B]y 8th grade, the average home school student performs four grade levels above the national average."*³

Tests from Idaho, from other states, and national tests all yield the same results. The academic performance of home educated students as a group is superior.⁴

It is also interesting to note that the socioeconomic status and educational background of the home schooling parents have no statistically significant impact on the academic achievement of the students. Home educated students from impoverished families, regardless of racial background and regardless of the educational achievement of the parents, attain test scores nearly identical to those attained in families with greater wealth and educational background.⁵

From the standpoint of educational methodology, that the draft recommendation calls for the use of Idaho's statewide assessment test to evaluate the quality of the education being received by the home schooled students is very troubling.

In analyzing the propriety of this approach, consider this: in a typical public school classroom, the scores of students taking the assessment test will yield a bell-curve formation. Depending on many factors other than the skill of the teacher, within the same class some students will score at the top of the range while others score at the bottom. By themselves, the scores obtained by an individual student cannot serve as a valid indicator of the effectiveness of the teacher. If a student scores on the 20th percentile, we may be inclined to judge the teacher harshly. However, if that student had scored on the 10th percentile on the last test, the teacher should have received unrestrained praise for the progress that was seen.

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The draft recommendation makes this mistake: it suggests that all home educated students be forced to take the state assessment test. Then any home educated student that scores below grade level will be forced out of home education. No consideration will be given to the actual aptitude of the student.

The proposal also raises issues of equal protection of the law. The proposal could result in the forced placement of the home schooled student into public school. On the other hand, public school teachers would never be subject to an equivalent penalty. Public school students scoring below grade level would never be forced from the public schools to be taught in private schools, for example. This distinction arguably amounts to an unconstitutional form of discrimination based upon "family status."

While there is an almost irresistible urge to try to bring accountability to the educational arena by standardized, objective testing, the fact is that such an approach tells us almost nothing about the quality of the instruction actually being received by the individual student.

Fiscal Inaccuracies:

The draft recommendation offers an unreasonable assessment that the testing program could be made financially self-sustaining, evidently by charging the home schooled families enough to cover the cost of administering the test. Several other aspects of that fiscal impact are worthy of comment.

First, why should the home educated students, who are already saving the state thousands of education dollars each year by their nonuse of the public schools, be required to pay for the cost of assessment tests they have no interest in taking?

Second, the cost of administering the assessment test itself is not the entire cost incurred by the state. In fact, it could be a relatively nominal portion of that cost. If the test results reveal home educated students scoring below grade level, those students would very possibly be forced into the public school system. At present, the state of Idaho pays approximately \$5,000.00 for each public school student each year. If the number of home educated students forced into the public system is significant, the public funds necessary to educate those students will be massive. Since special needs students would be those most likely to score below grade level, the cost per year could even be significantly higher.

Finally, the system proposed by the draft recommendation creates a massive financial conflict of interest. Under the proposal, the public school districts will assess the educational achievement of the home educated students. If the student scores below

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grade level, there is likelihood that the student will end up attending the public schools. This will trigger additional tax revenues being received by the school. Consequently, the school district has a vested financial interest in the outcome of the test, an incentive to do what it can to see that home educated students fail the test. This conflict of interest will create the appearance of the fox guarding the henhouse.

Conclusions:

On all counts, the ICHE and CHOIS Boards of Directors believe that the draft recommendation is a poor idea.

It is premised on the myth that significant numbers of home schooled students are being educationally neglected by their parents. They are not.

It is premised on the failure to understand that both home schooled students and their parents are already subject to all statutes on truancy and juvenile delinquency.

It fails to recognize that the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* expressly excludes home educated students from the requirements of the Act and forbids the states from subjecting home educated students to those standards.

It proposes the use of individual test scores in a manner that would punish home school teachers while the equivalent affect on public school teachers would be minimal. It also would improperly attempt to use an individual student's test scores as an indicator of the quality of the education being received by that student.

It potentially would result in a significant enlargement of the public education budget if numerous home schooled students were forced into the public school system.

Worst of all, it threatens to trammel the freedoms of the very students and families that have achieved the highest academic results in the state. Instead of rewarding those results with even greater freedoms, the recommendation would subject thousands of students and their parents to threats to their precious liberties.

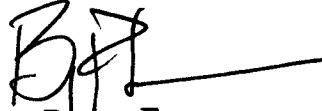
For all of the foregoing reasons, the Boards of Directors of the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators and Christian Homeschoolers of Idaho State strongly oppose the

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approval, whether in whole or in part, of the draft recommendation concerning home education.

Sincerely,



Barry Peters, Esq.
Legal Advisor

Idaho Coalition of Home Educators &
Christian Homeschoolers of Idaho State

Copies: ICHE Board of Directors
CHOIS Board of Directors

ENDNOTES

¹ Ray, Brian D. *A Nationwide Study of Home Education: Family Characteristics, Legal Matters, and Student Achievement*. Salem: National Home Education Research Institute, 1990.

Ray, Brian D. *Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits*. Salem: National Home Education Research Institute, 1997.

² Ray, Brian D. *Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Pub, 2002. 52-55.

³ Idaho Coalition of Home Educators. *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills: School District Comparison; Test Results Comparison; Test Results Analysis*. Boise: Idaho Coalition of Home Educators, 2003.

Rudner, Lawrence M. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives: The Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998*, vol. 7. <http://epaa.asu.edu>.

⁴ Ray, Brian D. *Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Pub, 2002. 55.

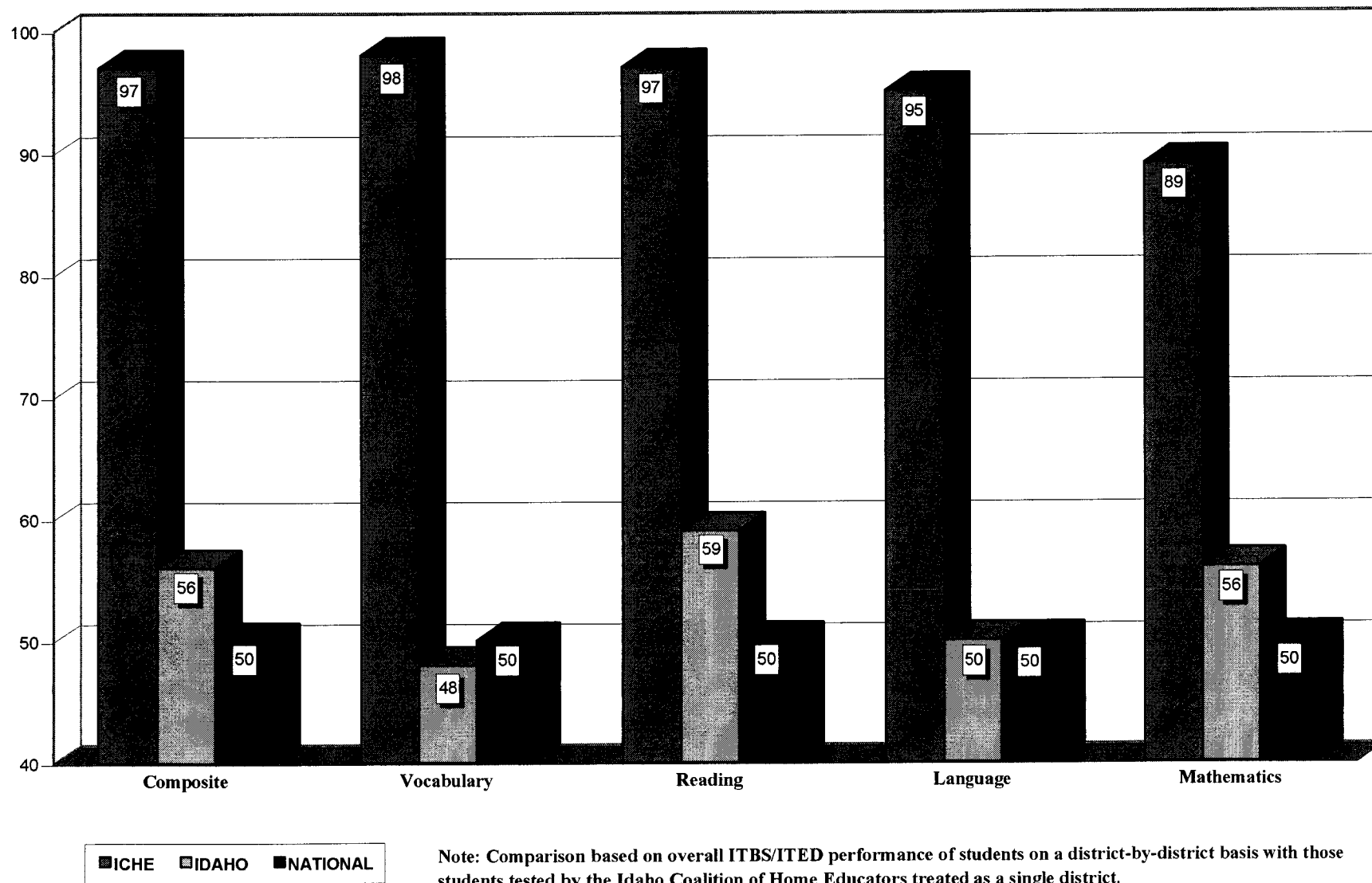
⁵ Ray, Brian D. *A Nationwide Study of Home Education: Family Characteristics, Legal Matters, and Student Achievement*. Salem: National Home Education Research Institute, 1990.

Ray, Brian D. *Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits*. Salem: National Home Education Research Institute, 1997.

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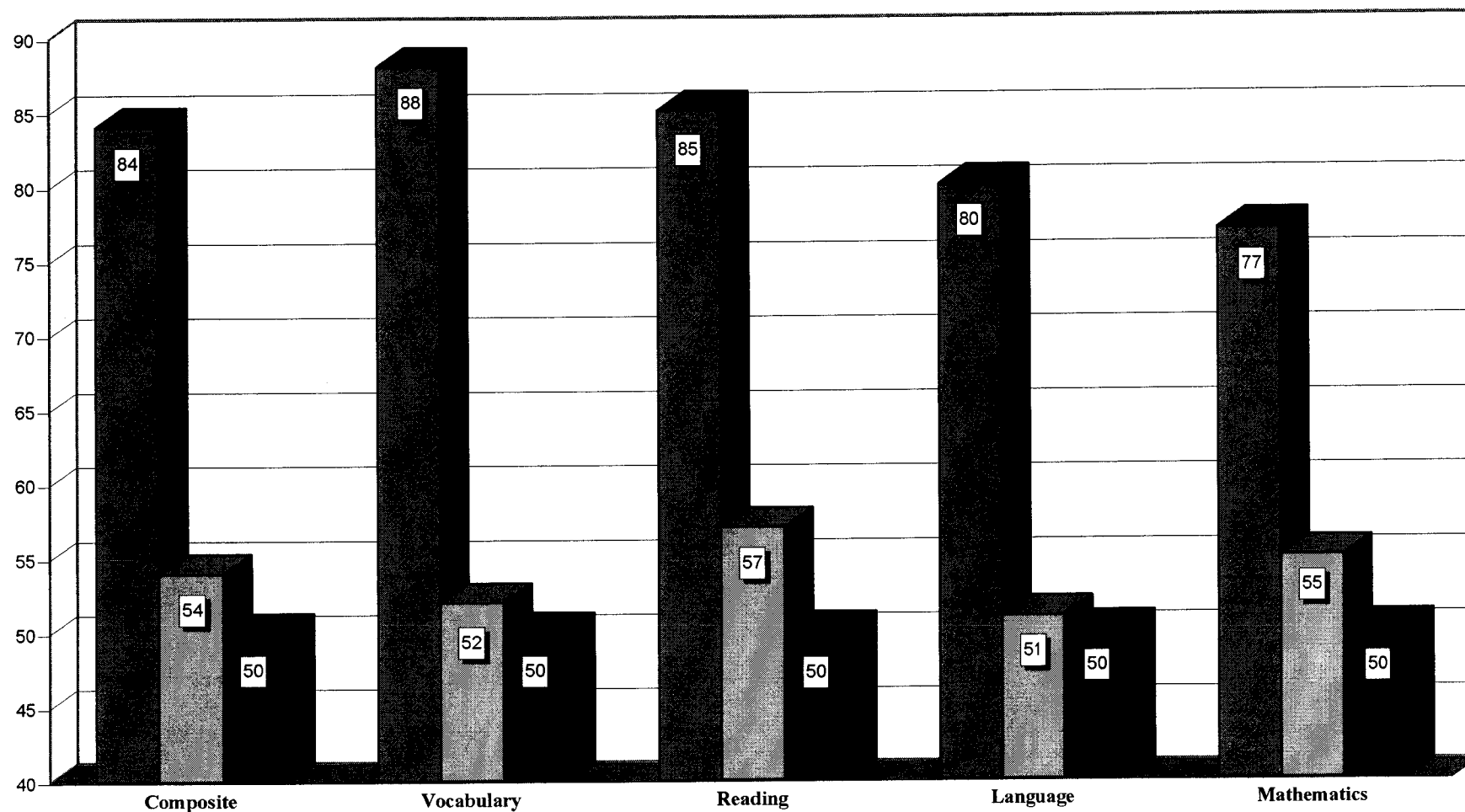
SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPARISON

Comparison of Idaho Coalition of Home Educators,
State of Idaho School Districts, and National School Districts
- 2003 -



TEST RESULTS COMPARISON

Idaho Coalition of Home Educators
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills & Iowa Tests of Educational Development
- 2003 -

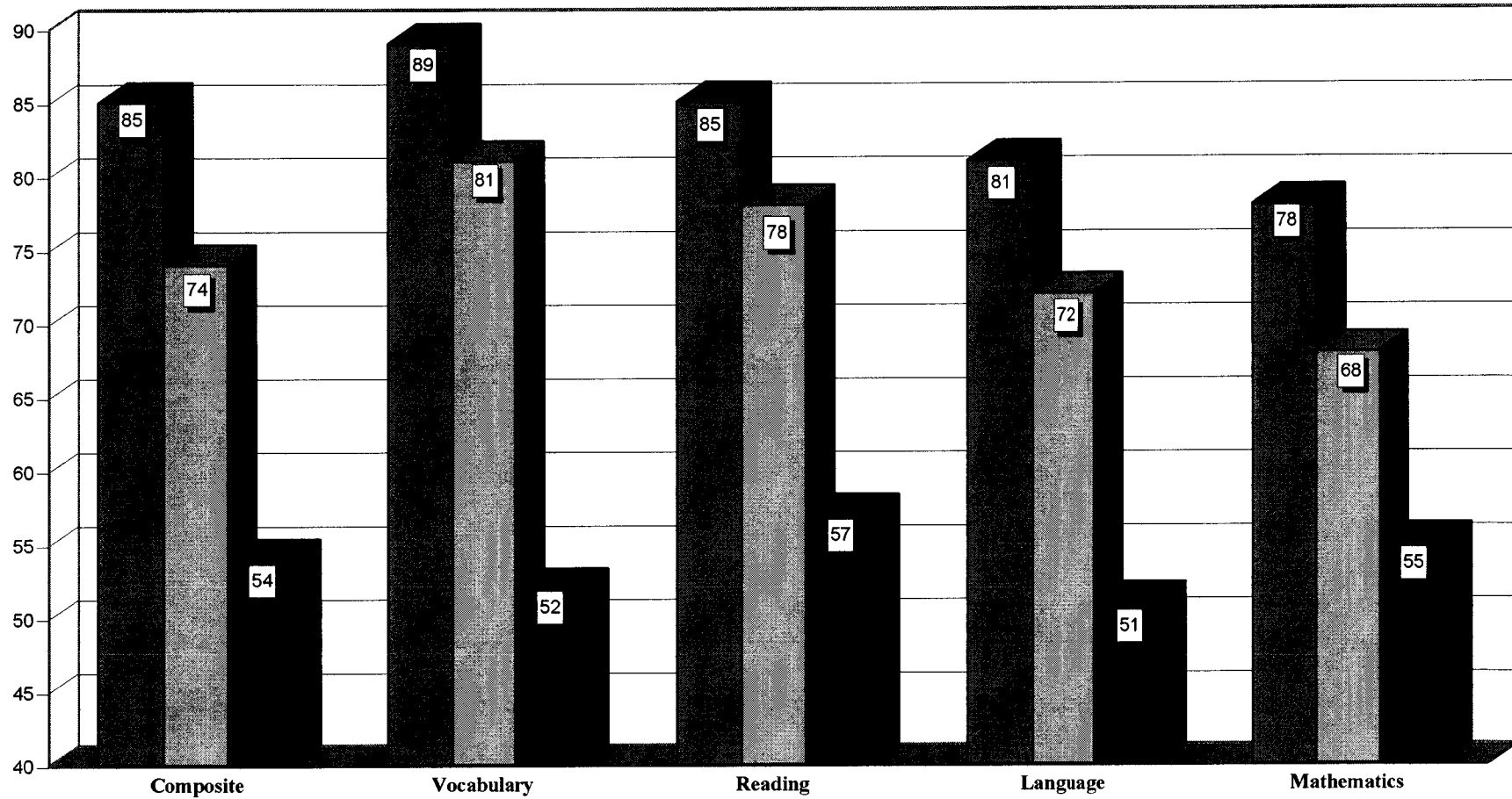


■ ICHE
■ IDAHO
■ NATIONAL

ICHE: Percentile ratings of home educated students tested by Idaho Coalition of Home Educators on 2003 ITBS/ITED
IDAHO: Statewide percentile ratings of public school students on 2001 ITBS/TAP (latest scores available)
NATIONAL: Nationwide percentile ratings of public school students on 2003 ITBS/ITED

TEST RESULTS ANALYSIS

Idaho Coalition of Home Educators
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills & Iowa Tests of Educational Development
- 2003 -



- A
- B
- C

A: Percentile rating of ICHE students tested who had been home educated three years or more

B: Percentile rating of ICHE students tested who had been home educated two years or less

C: Percentile rating of all Idaho public school students tested on 2001 ITBS/TAP (latest scores available)

To: The 47 members of the Governor's 2020 Blue Ribbon Task Force
Fax: (208) 332-7417

From: Lee Ann Richter
Fax: (208) 323-1390

Dear Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force:

I understand that you are considering a draft recommendation that issues a call for forced registration and testing of all home educated students in the State of Idaho.

I would ask that you oppose such a recommendation concerning home education. Under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, home educated students are excluded from the requirements of this Act and it forbids states from subjecting students to those standards. Those who home educate their students in the State of Idaho are dedicated families that are already achieving high levels of academic excellence. This draft recommendation would violate the Federal No Child Left Behind Act and would remove precious freedoms for the very families who are trying to make a difference for the State of Idaho.

Please vote against the Draft Recommendation on Home Education.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Lee Ann Richter

Cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne Fax: (208) 334-2175
Lt. Governor James Risch Fax: (208) 334-2175

To: Mr. Ray Smelek
Fax: (208) 332-7417

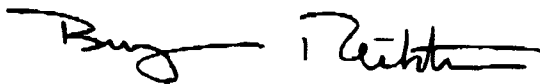
From: Bryan H. Richter
Fax: (208) 323-1390

Dear Mr. Smelek:

Thank you for your decision to withdraw the Draft Recommendation on Home Education. I have been disturbed by the isolated complaints of families "home schooling their children" and yet, not providing any education at all. It is difficult to be grouped in with those one or two incidents and, on the other side, seeing first hand the excellence produced by dedicated parents and students in the home schooling arena. It is concerning me, as a home educating parent, to think of my rights, under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, which prohibits states from subjecting home educated students to those standards, being taken away. I do not see the rights of the many being eroded for the benefit of the few who do not achieve in the Public School Realm. The focus needs to be trained on the broken Public School system rather than punishing those families who are trying to make a difference in their own children for the future good of the State of Idaho.

Again, thank you for your willingness to hear of our concerns and to act accordingly. Your hard work on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Bryan H. Richter

Cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne Fax: (208) 334-2175
Lt. Governor James Risch Fax: (208) 334-2175

To: The 47 members of the Governor's 2020 Blue Ribbon Task Force
Fax: (208) 332-7417

From: Bryan H. Richter
Fax: (208) 323-1390

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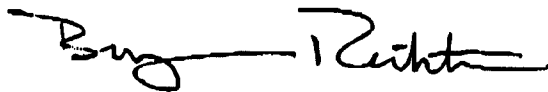
I have heard that you are considering a draft recommendation that issues a call for forced registration and testing of all home educated students in the State of Idaho.

I strongly oppose such a recommendation and ask that you soundly oppose it as well. As a home educating parent for the past 12 years, I have appreciated the freedom home schooling parents have had in the State of Idaho to educate their children. I have seen the test score results, not only of my own children, but also of those who have been home educated throughout Idaho. Idaho has every reason to be proud of the job those parents are doing and the excellent work those students are producing. Forced registration and mandatory testing will not improve on the quality already being achieved. In fact, by punishing those families who are dedicated to educating their children with the highest standards, I believe it will hinder that process.

Please vote against the Draft Recommendation on Home Education.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Bryan H. Richter

Cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne Fax: (208) 334-2175
Lt. Governor James Risch Fax: (208) 334-2175

To: Ray Smelek

CC: Governor, Dirk Kempthorn,
Lt. Governor, James Risch,
ICHE Listkeeper,

Subject: The recommendation on Home Education.

Dear Mr. Smelek,

Thank you for your decision to withdraw the Draft
Recommendation on Home Education.

Sincerely,
Diana Philyaw

To: Members of the Governors Blue Ribbon Task Force

CC: Governor, Dirk Kempthorn,
Lt. Governor, James Risch,
ICHE Listkeeper,

Subject: The recommendation on Home Education.

Dear Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force,

The existing freedom to home school in Idaho has produced academic excellence of the highest level as proven by the ITBS/ITED test scores. Those of us who value the right to home educate wish to continue to provide our children with this highest level of academic achievement.

To encourage the opportunity to pursue academic excellence, we ask you to vote against the draft recommendation on Home Education if it comes before you.

Thank you for your attention on this matter,

Sincerely,
Diana Philyaw

To: Ray Smelek

CC: Governor, Dirk Kempthorn,
Lt. Governor, James Risch,
ICHE Listkeeper,

Subject: The recommendation on Home Education.

Dear Mr. Smelek,

Thank you for your decision to withdraw the Draft
Recommendation on Home Education.

Sincerely,
Diana Philyaw

June 22, 2003

Jim and Angie Cox
1305 E. Columbia Rd.
Meridian, ID 83642

Blue Ribbon Task Force
Office of the Governor
Boise, ID 83720
VIA FAX: 332-7417

RE: Opposition to the Recommendation on Home Education

Dear Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force,

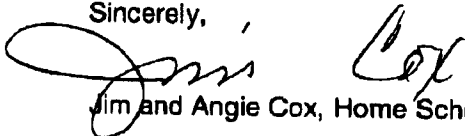
We, as members of the home school community, want to thank you for your efforts to keep quality education as a top priority in our state. We have now been schooling our daughters at home for 18 years and celebrated our oldest daughter's graduation in May along with 60 other accomplished home school graduates at the NNU Brandt Center. We have enjoyed the support of the Idaho Legislature in our efforts to date.

However, we are troubled as we recently heard some of the details of the draft Recommendation on Home Education. We strongly oppose the draft Recommendation for several reasons. The Recommendation appears to be drafted in response to wrong information and it attempts to fix a system that is not broken. It will complicate an education system that is working extremely well. The home school approach is far from broken. There is much evidence available that supports the exceptional success of the home-schooled method of educating young people. Voluntary test results are pouring in and the results are consistently impressive.

The weight of supporting data in favor of home schooling is so extensive that it should be encouraged, not discouraged by additional needless and complicated legislation. Yet, the Recommendation as drafted would scrutinize home school students and potentially place lower achieving students in the public schools. This Recommendation is unsupportive and assumes there is a growing problem that needs corrected. It penalizes those parents who are working very hard in their parenting roles. The Task Force needs to support this successful method of educating our young people.

We urgently ask that you look again at the enormous resource of information available on the successes of home schooling. Please acknowledge that this Recommendation is based on wrong or insufficient information and it needs to be discarded. Schooling at home is an excellent choice and it needs the support of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Sincerely,



Jim and Angie Cox, Home School Parents

Cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne
Lt Governor James Risch
ICHE

To Ray Smelek: Thank you for your leadership in questioning the draft Recommendations on Home Education. You are appreciated -



Robbie Robinson

The Idaho Committee for Integrity and Excellence in Education

June 22, 2003

TO: Ms. Mille Flandro & Dr. Rick Hagood
Education Committee, Blue Ribbon Task Force
Office of the Governor
Boise, Idaho 83720

RE: Draft Recommendations. Home Education

Dear Ms. Flandro, Dr. Hagood & Members of the Education Committee

You are aware of the statewide concern that has generated in the state regarding the draft of the Education Committee Recommendation for home education. Further study will substantiate the validity of these concerns, and will hopefully be taken seriously by your committee.

Here is a further concern. Is the Education Blue Ribbon Task Force aware of the statewide response to the State Board of Education's Assessment Commission's proposal to continue the passing of the ISAT high stakes 10th Grade examination as a requirement for receiving a high school diploma? Serious questions emerged in these hearings regarding the validity and reliability of these examinations. The test does not align with the standards, which are not current and in some cases reflect a political bias. The standards are more complex than of any other state and the test is easier than that required of many of these other states. Many question that the ISAT is a normed test, without which there is no valid basis for national comparison, and therefore of limited value in actually determining a true level of student achievement. Idaho is facing the same problems experienced by other states who earlier embarked on the high-stakes testing approach to educational reform. None have experienced significant success. After great public expense, all are abandoning or modifying their plans. To subject home schoolers to the very problems that they are generally successfully escaping makes little sense to many who believe in parental choice and involvement. Is the committee aware that in the "No Child Left Behind" educational proposal? It provides that students in home taught programs must be released from any state regulations if the state is to receive Title I monies.

Lets be certain we all do our own homework before recommending another questionable educational proposal.

Sincerely, *Robbie Robinson*

cc's: Dirk Kempthorne, Governor & James Reich, Lt. Governor

F. Willard Robinson, Ed. D.
Phone: 208-331-5044

796 River Park Lane
Fax: 208-433-8812

Boise, Idaho 83706
Email: r-jrobinson@rmci.net



The Idaho Committee for Integrity and Excellence in Education

June 22, 2003

TO: Ms. Mille Flandro & Dr. Rick Hagood
Education Committee, Blue Ribbon Task Force
Office of the Governor
Boise, Idaho 83720

RE: Draft Recommendations. Home Education

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Sincerely, *Robbie Robinson*

cc's: Dirk Kempthorne, Governor & James Reich, Lt. Governor

F. Willard Robinson, Ed. D.
Phone: 208-331-5044

796 River Park Lane
Fax: 208-433-8812

Boise, Idaho 83706
Email: r-jrobinson@rmei.net

Fax Message

Date: Sunday, June 22, 2003

Time: 11:11 PM

To: Ray Smelek

Company: Comittee member

Fax Phone #: 3327417

From: Thomas & Colette Kudlo

Subject: Draft Recommendation on Home Education

Total # of Pages (including cover): 1

Memo: Dear Mr. Smelek,

Thank you for your decision to withdraw the Draft Recommendation on Home Education and to recommend no action be taken on the basis that if it isn't broken-don't fix it.

Sincerely,
Thomas & Colette Kudlo

If all pages were not received, please call back immediately:

4202 W. Daphne St.
Meridian, Id 83642

Ms. Millie Flandoro & Dr. Rich Hagood, Co-Chairs
Education Committee
Blue Ribbon Task Force
Office of the governor
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force,

As the parents of a home school student, We take the education of our children very seriously and want to give them the best possible start in life.

I am alarmed to hear of the plans and ideals of the Blue Ribbon Task Force and strongly appose its draft recommendation and ask that you vote against it.

Sincerely,



Steve Callan

cc: Governor Dirk Kemthorne
Lt. Governor James Risch
Mr. Ray Smelek

Loneta Rice
2814 Pauley Dr.
Boise, ID 83704
208-376-4247
June 23, 2003


Dear Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force,

I am pleased with the purpose for the Blue Ribbon Task Force, but I am worried by the "Draft Recommendation on Home Education". I do not believe it will be good for the over-all education of Idaho's young people to try controlling its most successful method of education.

I have home schooled ten children over a period of nineteen years in three states. Idaho's present set up has been the best for our family.

A personal reason for not wanting children forced back into the public school system if they test below grade average is that we have seen the benefits of personal attention to the schooling of two of our children with learning handicaps. It was one of the reasons for taking our children out of public schools. Twenty years ago one of our daughters tested in the 45th percentile in California's public schools in the fourth grade. California uses a test that is not validated against national standards. The next year we began home schooling six of our children. In two years our daughter was scoring in the 74th percentile on the Iowa Tests that are nationally standardized. Another son suffers from severe seizures that began when he was four years old. His language skills were affected, but not his math skills. Because the family was already home educating, these challenges could be addressed. He was able to complete the study of calculus at age fourteen. His language skills were developed by patiently playing "Scrabble" with him every day using a dictionary to help him remember common words. He recently passed his GED and is still developing language skills by constant interaction with adults.

Thank you,



Loneta Rice
2814 Pauley Dr.
Boise, ID 83704
208-376-4247
June 23, 2003

Dear Mr. Smelek,

Thank you for listening to the reasoning and evidence from the home school groups concerning the "Draft Recommendation on Home Education". Please be aware of our appreciation for the opportunity to educate our children in a way that we find best as parents.

I have home schooled ten children over a period of nineteen years in three states. Idaho's present set up has been the best for our family.

A personal reason for not wanting children forced back into the public school system if they test below grade average is that we have seen the benefits of personal attention to the schooling of two of our children with learning handicaps. It was one of the reasons for taking our children out of public schools. Twenty years ago one of our daughters tested in the 45th percentile in California's public schools in the fourth grade. California uses a test that is not validated against national standards. The next year we began home schooling six of our children. In two years our daughter was scoring in the 74th percentile on the Iowa Tests that are nationally standardized. Another son suffers from severe seizures that began when he was four years old. His language skills were affected, but not his math skills. Because the family was already home educating, these challenges could be addressed. He was able to complete the study of calculus at age fourteen. His language skills were developed by patiently playing "Scrabble" with him every day using a dictionary to help him remember common words. He recently passed his GED and is still developing language skills by constant interaction with adults.

Thank you,

Loneta Rice

6-23-03

Dear members of the Governor's
Blue Ribbon Task Force,

I am requesting that you vote
against the "Draft Recommendations on Home
Education" if it comes before you.

The "No Child Left Behind Law"
states that homeschooled children are
not required to take state assessments.

The ISAT test is not an accurate
test, it is computer driven so that
everytime a student misses a question
the next one gets easier, and the
teacher never knows where the
student has a problem in order to
help them.

The parents were told the
reason the state switched from
the Iowa Basic test was so that the
teacher would know what was missed
on the ISAT and they would be able
to help the student with what they
missed. This is not true the teachers
are only given a test score not on
evaluation.

Homeschools have always tested
higher than the public schools nation-
wide, so why would parents want
their children to take such a test or be
subject to a system of lower achievement?

a
concerned citizen)

Thank you, Jane Lesko
(Jane Lesko, Rt 1 Box 37c
Grangeville, ID 83530

To: Mr. Ray Smelek
Fax: (208) 332-7417

From: Lee Ann Richter
Fax: (208) 323-1390

Dear Mr. Smelek:

Thank you so much for your decision to withdraw the Draft Recommendation on Home Education. As a home schooling parent for the past 12 year, I have appreciated the freedom home schooling parents have had in the State of Idaho to educate their children and produce excellence in learning through their commitment to their children. I have seen the test score results, not only of my own children, but of those who have been home educated throughout Idaho. Idaho has every reason to be proud of the job those parents are doing and the excellent work those students are producing. Forced registration and mandatory testing will not improve on the quality already being achieved. In fact, I believe it will hinder that process.

We appreciate all your hard work on Governor Dirk Kempthorne's 2020 blue Ribbon Task Force Education Committee. We know that you have the best interest of ALL the children of Idaho at heart.

Sincerely,



Lee Ann Richter

Cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne Fax: (208) 334-2175
Lt. Governor James Risch Fax: (208) 334-2175